

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method of customizing a multi-media message with emoticons, the multi-media message being created by a sender for a recipient wherein the multi-media message comprises an animated entity audibly delivering a text message, the method comprising:
 - storing emoticons related to actions associated with the animated entity;
 - providing to a sender at least one button option for choosing emoticons to insert into the text message at a location of a cursor; and
 - upon the sender choosing an emoticon using one of the at least one button options, inserting an emoticon into the text message at the location of the cursor, wherein when the animated entity delivers the text message, the animated entity exhibits the actions associated with the inserted emoticons.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the emoticons comprise at least one of a wink, a smile, an affirmative animated entity motion, eyes opening and staring, eyes popping out, and nose elongation.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the emoticons comprise at least one of a surprise, frown, eyes rolling, shoulder shrug, tongue motion, embarrassment, blushing, scream, tears and kiss.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the animated entity is a face.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - after the sender chooses an emoticon using one of the at least one button options, presenting to the sender an amplitude option associated with the chosen emoticon; and
 - upon the sender selecting an amplitude associated with the chosen emoticon, applying the chosen amplitude to the chosen emoticon when the multi-media message is presented to the recipient.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the button options are icons representing an emoticon.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein inserting an emoticon into the text message at the location of the cursor further comprises inserting an icon representing the chosen emoticon into the text message at the position of the cursor.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein inserting an emoticon into the text message at the location of the cursor further comprises inserting an icon representing the chosen emoticon into the text message at the position of the cursor and wherein the inserted icon includes a visual representation of the chosen amplitude of the chosen emoticon.

9. A method of customizing a multi-media message by choosing emoticons from a group of stored emoticons, the multi-media message being created by a sender where text typed by the sender is presented to a recipient using an animated entity in the multi-media message, the method comprising:

providing to the sender at least one button option, each button option of the at least one button option associated with an emoticon associated with an emotion displayed by the animated entity during delivery of the multi-media message; and upon the user choosing an emoticon using one of the at least one button options, inserting the emoticon into the text typed by the sender, wherein as the multi-media message is delivered to the recipient, the animated entity displays the associated emotion.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the animated entity is a face.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the animated entity is a human face.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein inserting the emoticon into the text typed by the sender further comprises inserting the emoticon into the text at a location of a cursor.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the at least one button options is an icon representing an emoticon.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein inserting the emoticon into the text typed by
2 the sender further comprises inserting an icon representing the chosen emoticon into the
3 text of the message.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the icon is inserted at a location of a cursor in
2 the text.

1 16. A method of customizing a multi-media message by choosing features from a
2 group of stored features, the multi-media message being created by a sender where text
3 typed by the sender is presented to a recipient using an animated entity in the multi-
4 media message, the method comprising:

5 providing to the sender at least one button option, each button option of the at
6 least one button option associated with a feature to add to the animated entity; and

7 upon the user choosing a feature using one of the at least one button options,
8 inserting the chosen feature into the text of the message, wherein as the multi-media
9 message is delivered to the recipient, the chosen feature is presented in a visual and
10 audible manner by the animated entity.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the group of stored features comprises an eye
2 color feature, a mouth protrusion feature, a skinniness feature, a fat feature and an age
3 feature.

1 18. The method of claim 16, further comprising:

2 after the sender chooses a feature using one of the at least one button options,
3 presenting to the sender an amplitude option associated with the chosen feature; and
4 upon the sender selecting an amplitude associated with the chosen feature,
5 applying the chosen amplitude to the chosen feature when the multi-media message is
6 presented to the recipient.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein if the selected animated entity is unable to
2 present the chosen feature, the method further comprises ignoring the chosen feature.

1 20. The method of claim 18, if the selected animated entity is unable to present the
2 chosen feature, the method further comprises replacing the chosen feature with a
3 replacement feature using default parameters.

1 21. The method of claim 18, wherein inserting the chosen feature into the text of the
2 message comprises inserting an icon representing the chosen feature into the text of the
3 message at the location of a cursor.

1 22. A method of presenting a multi-media message having an animated entity created
2 by a sender including at least one chosen emoticon, the multi-media message being
3 created by the sender where text typed by the sender is presented to a recipient using an
4 animated entity in the multi-media message, the at least one emoticon being in a position
5 associated with an ordering of the typed text, the method comprising:

6 beginning a presentation of the at least one chosen emoticon by the animated
7 entity a first predefined number of words before the at least one emoticon position
8 within the ordering of the typed text; and

9 ending the presentation of the at least one emoticon a second predefined number
10 of words after the at least one emoticon position within the ordering of the typed text.

1 23. The method of presenting a multi-media message having an animated entity
2 created by a sender including at least one chosen emoticon of claim 22, wherein the first
3 predefined number of words and the second predefined number of words is associated
4 with the respective word lengths of the words before and after the position of the at least
5 one emoticon within the ordering of the typed text.

1 24. A method of presenting a multi-media message having an animated entity created
2 by a sender including at least one chosen emoticon, the multi-media message being
3 created by the sender where text typed by the sender is presented to a recipient using an
4 animated entity in the multi-media message, the at least one emoticon being in a position
5 associated with an ordering of the typed text, the method comprising:

beginning a presentation of the at least one chosen emoticon by the animated entity a first predefined period of time before the at least one emoticon position within the ordering of the typed text; and
ending the presentation of the at least one emoticon a second period of time after the at least one emoticon position within the ordering of the typed text.

25. The method of presenting a multi-media message having an animated entity created by a sender including at least one chosen emoticon of claim 24, wherein the first predefined period of time and the second predefined period of time are variable based on a position of the chosen emoticon within the text of the message.

26. A method of enabling a sender to customize a multi-media message by choosing emoticons from a group of stored emoticons, the multi-media message being created by the sender where text typed by the sender is presented to a recipient using an animated entity in the multi-media message, the method comprising:

providing to the sender an option to associate at least one typed word with a chosen emoticon, wherein if the sender associates at least one typed word with a chosen emoticon, each at least one typed word associated with an emoticon is associated with the presentation by the animated entity of the chosen emoticon.

27. The method of enabling the sender to customize a multi-media message of claim 26, wherein providing the sender an option to associate at least one typed word further comprises providing the sender an option to assign a color to the at least one typed word such that the chosen emoticon begins to be presented by the animated entity to the recipient at the first typed word with the assigned color and the chosen emoticon presentation by the animated entity ends at the last typed word with the assigned color.

29. The method of enabling a sender to customize a multi-media message by choosing emoticons from a group of stored emoticons of claim 26, wherein providing to the sender an option to associate at least one typed word with a chosen emoticon further

comprises presenting the sender with the option of underlining the at least one typed word to associate the at least one typed word with the chosen emoticon.

30. The method of enabling a sender to customize a multi-media message by choosing emoticons from a group of stored emoticons of claim 29, the method further comprising:

providing to the sender an option to amplify the chosen emoticon by underlining more than once the at least one typed word associated with the chosen emoticon.

31. A method of customizing a multi-media message having an animated entity with at least one emoticon associated with the multi-media message by a sender, the animated entity delivering a typed message by the sender to a recipient, the method comprising:

upon the sender inserting an emoticon into the typed message with a start sign and a stop sign, delivering the multi-media message to the recipient using the animated entity wherein the animated entity starts the emoticon at the start sign and stops the emoticon at the stop sign.

32. The method of customizing a multi-media message of claim 31, further comprising:

before delivering the multi-media message to the recipient, checking a consistency with the start sign and stop sign inserted into the message text by the sender, and if there is consistency with the start sign and the stop sign, delivering the multi-media message to the recipient.